The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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CONTENTS OF NO. 8.

HOW DOTH DEATH SPEAK? 93
THE GROWTH OF LIFE 94
THE STILL HOUR 96
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 97
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL 100
AMUSEMENT COLUMN 104
IMPORTANT NOTICES 104

HOW DOTH DEATH SPEAK?

How doth Death speak of our beloved
When it has laid them low,
When it has set its hallowing touch
On speechless lips and brow?

It clothes their every gift and grace
With radiance from the holiest place,
With light as from an angel's face!

Recalling with resistless force,
And tracing to their hidden source,
Deeds scarcely noticed in their course;

This little, loving, fond device,
That daily act of sacrifice,
Of which too late we learn the price!

Opening our weeping eyes to trace
Simple, unnoticed kindnesses,
Forgotten notes of tenderness,

Which evermore to us must be
Sacred as hymns of infancy
Learned listening at a mother's knee.

Thus doth Death speak of our beloved,
When it has laid them low:
Then let Love antedate Death's work,
And do this *now!*

How doth Death speak of our beloved,
When it has laid them low,
When it has set its hallowing touch
On speechless lip and brow?

It sweeps their faults with heavy hand,
As sweeps the sea the trampled sand,
Till scarce the faintest print is scanned.

It shows how such a vexing deed
Was but a generous nature's weed
Or some choice virtue run to seed;

How that small fretting fretfulness
Was but love's over-anxiousness,
Which had not been, had love been less.

Thus doth Death speak of our beloved,
When it has laid them low:
Then let Love antedate Death's work,
And do this now!

How doth Death speak of our beloved,
When it has laid them low,
When it has set its hallowing touch
On speechless lip and brow?

It takes each failing on our part,
And brands it in upon the heart
With caustic power and cruel art.

The small neglect that may have pained
A giant nature will have gained,
When it can never be explained.

The little service which had proved
How tenderly we watched and loved,
And those mute lips to glad smiles moved;

The little gift from out our store,
Which might have cheered some cheerless hour,
When they with earth's poor needs were poor,
But never will be needed more!

O Christ, our life, foredate the work of Death,
And do this now!
Thou who art Love, thus hallow our beloved!
Not Death, but Thou!

—*Mrs. Charles.*

A soul occupied with great ideas best performs small duties. The divinest views of life penetrate most clearly into the meanest emergencies. . . . A heavenly spirit, taking up its abode with us, can alone sustain well the daily toils and tranquilly pass the humiliations of our condition.

THE GROWTH OF LIFE.

"The fruit of righteousness is a tree of life."—PROV. xi. 30.

At the opening of every new year the question, What is your life? presents itself to each of us with more or less force and earnestness. As time flashes past us with accelerated speed, it concerns us to know exactly what use we are expected to make of it. This life of ours is mainly valuable for what it is or for what it has or for what it does. In every human character we demand proportion, a relation of parts, harmonious blending of capacities.

Whatever is out of proportion, unbalanced, and inharmonious, is offensive and hurtful. A house eighty feet long and ten feet wide is distressing to a just sense of proportion. So a mind developed in some particular direction and stunted in others, a capacious memory but with no sense to fill it, a reckless fancy with no judgment to balance it, warmth of feeling combined with a feeble reason, a character in which great strength and great weakness are yoked together,—these are anomalies or monstrosities. The proportions are not preserved, and so the æsthetic sense is offended.

The dimensions of our inner life are determined by the scale to which they are set. We are all character-builders, and the quantity and quality of our personality depend altogether upon the ideals to which we shape it. If the ideal be poor, the life will be poor; and, if the ideal be complete, the life will be rich and full. If the dominating aim of our existence be unsteady, with no clearness of purpose and definiteness of outline, the life will correspond to it, and be as shapeless as a jelly-fish. The individuality that has no characteristics has no character: it is like a marsh that is full of snakes and tadpoles. And so the first requisite for soul-building is sufficient power of mind and will to constitute a distinctive personality, strong and resolute enough to shape itself rather than allow itself to be shaped. Much determined force is indispensable to the making of manly and womanly character. Our chief duty is to grow into an ideal, and not to drift into a fate.

No one who cherishes his individuality in such a way as not to allow it to be swamped by custom or effaced by neglect feels himself to be a machine. He is not a cipher and nonentity, but a sacred and inviolable personality, in which he lives and through which God works. Tennyson, in his poem entitled "De Profundis," puts the case for man's individuality as against the materialism which absorbs him in nature and the pantheism which overwhelms him in God. He broods over the advent of a new life, the birth of a child, as a marvel and a mystery. The infant is not simply the offspring of its parents: it is connected with the forces of nature, which have made its parents what they are. All that has occurred in the previous history of the world and of the human race has conspired to produce it; and in its full career it will play a part which will be determined to some extent by the inborn energy with which it enters on life, and to some extent by the energies of the universe, now co-operating with it, and now resisting it.

In all that he says in this first greeting the poet keeps himself within the narrowest limits. The child is a mere animal.

Tennyson next gives a second greeting to the child which has come out of the deep, and he does it from an entirely different standpoint. The infant is no longer a mere human animal, without spiritual environment or destiny. He is not the child of dust and a single day. He is a being with distinct individuality. He is a person, not a thing, accountable in due time for what he is and does, with an ideal and purpose to fulfil, a destiny to realize sooner or later, —a conscious child of a personal God. He feels himself related to the Infinite, out of whom he has come and whose image he bears.

Here we have a strain of higher mood than that which shocked us at the first greeting. The child still comes out of the deep; but it is not the deep darkness of blind unconscious force, working it knows not what, but the deep light of God, brightening as we follow it, and leading to the absolute eternal day. Once realize that Mind, intelligence, or spirit, is the Source from which the river of our being flows, and that there is in each one of us something akin to our Source, that our personality is a reflection of the Infinite Personality, and then human life assumes grand proportions, and becomes heir to an immortal destiny.

It must be obvious, however, that there is much in the outward circumstance of human life that militates against this unique personality, which was designed to be kept and cultivated. Every life that has anything like justice done to it is both studious and active: it absorbs its aliment from great minds, it holds commerce with exalted characters, it communes with men whose fellowship is inspiration and redemption, it takes counsel from the great and good, and from these alone, and so supplies itself with inward force and power which makes toil for others a privilege, and every duty a delight. And so I say to young people at the opening of a new year, Take the education of yourselves into your own hands, resolve that your characters shall have some ample and solid elements in them: do not permit yourselves to become the victims of modern haste and shallowness, but draw your life from the best literature and history of your own and other lands; for life without education large and generous is small and contracted. It is true there are some who like everything made easy,—literature in primers, philosophy in abstracts, politics in text-books, and religion in homœopathic doses. But, generally, young people who have had a good education prefer to try their powers upon ambitious themes. They read literature at first hand; they wrestle with the problems of economic and political science; they can appreciate theology scientifically stated, and sermons, though not written in words of one syllable.

But the best part of education is obtained in the school of life. The deepest truths we learn by experience, and so systematic study from books requires to be supplemented by active participation in the work of the world. We owe something to the city, the State, the nation; and fulness of personal character is conditioned upon a diligent fulfilment of the duties of citizenship. Good government goes with good citizens. There is education of the best sort in the arena of public life which cannot be acquired in any other school, and I long to see the time when the young men of our towns and cities will seek the training which comes from rescuing municipal and State government from unworthy people. It is for them to give their best manhood, while it is fresh and strong and unsophisticated, to the support of free institutions and to the service of the country. The nation needs their help, and they best develop their own characters by a patriotic answer to the national call. It is not enough to say that political life is selfish and corrupt, that the ward caucus is no place for a young politician who respects himself. If this be true, the more urgent and pressing becomes the claim upon those who have it in their power, in solemn league and covenant, to purify municipal and political life at the fountain. Here, if anywhere, is the training ground for character.

Here lies the secret of that growing indifference to public life, that recreant unwillingness to enter the lists against corruption and vice, that unaccountable shrinking from duty and responsibility, which hands over the affairs of city and State to mere self-seeking adventurers. The two great dangers of our time are sordid indifference to transcendent moral and social issues as they present themselves daily in public life, and a time-serving and immoral expediency which sets ease before excellence. Oh, let me beg of you, while strength and courage are fresh in your hearts, before cares become absorbing and responsibilities increase, to fling yourselves, with all the ardor of youth, into active public life, and play a noble, if a modest, part in the wise government of your native city and fatherland.

You have the example of Jesus to inspire you. The Christianity of the cloister is an anachronism: the religion that has no relation to life is an encumbrance. There is no aspect of the Master's life more instructive and interesting than that into which he was driven by the greatness of his nature and the smallness of his contemporaries. He stood by virtue of natural pre-eminence upon unscaled heights of human attainment. His character and his gospel were a surprise to his generation. He revealed a new heaven and a new earth. But he did more. He resolutely set himself to make the vision in his soul a reality in the life of his generation. There were wrongs, and he sought to rectify them; there were false ideas, and he would put true ones in their place; there were public vices, and he labored to correct them; there were desolating sorrows, and his hand was stretched forth to heal them. And so to all who garner vast moral re-

sources, who live in depths of earnestness and on heights of inspiration, life here is great, rich in opportunities and privileges. It is our privilege to live in mansions commensurate with our souls, and to feel while we live that, compared with them, "the stateliest houses man has reared are but tents in which a deathless humanity tarries for a night." Then

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

— *John Cuckson.*

THE STILL HOUR.

BE BRAVE.

As ye enter with the New Year,
Young or old, be brave in heart!
Life hath need of faithful service,
And each soul must bear its part.
Sweeter than a nation's praises
For high deeds of valor done
Is the simple joy of duty,
Is the strength of victory won.

— *Ella F. Stevens.*

OLD YEAR AND NEW YEAR.

Old Year and New Year,—
It is all God's year;
His time for sowing,
His time for reaping,
His time for growing,
For rest and quiet sleeping;
His time for soaring
On wings of the Spirit;
His time for adoring
The Infinite Merit.

O world above! our world,
Our times, and our places,
Are but as child's play
To thy marvellous spaces.
But if, as dear children,
With hearts full of yearning,
We love and forget not,
Are docile for learning,
Then New Year and Old Year,
Their hoping, regretting,
Will all turn to God's year,
With no time for fretting.

— *Wm. M. E. Butts.*

We all of us take our journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, and we all fall among thieves. Youth is our Jerusalem,—innocent youth, artless childhood, affectionate, confiding, dependent. It is a city in which God dwells. In the child's heart is the holy of holies,—a sacred place, seldom entered, but containing the ark of the covenant,—the covenant between the Creator and his child.

And we fall among thieves by the way. Life itself is a thief, and steals from us strength, youth, beauty, power of body and mind,—the externals, the raiment of the soul. The world is another thief, and steals our simplicity, steals our innocence, wounds us in its hard struggles, and leaves us scarred, hard, and harsh, cold, selfish, and suspicious. Sinful habit is another thief who takes from us the power and the wish to reform, and so leaves us half dead by the wayside. We cover up these wounds. We are too proud to let it be known that we wish for sympathy or need help. Each one knows the bitterness of his own heart, but we do not see what is in the heart of our neighbors.

Oh, my brothers and sisters! as we look about us on our fellow-creatures, let us think that every one has his own secret sorrow. This will lead us into a broader sympathy. That man, who seems so successful, has his bitter disappointments. You see his outward triumphs,—his offices, his titles, his wealth; but, if you looked into his heart, you would find, perhaps, an aching wound. —*James Freeman Clarke;* "*The Good Samaritan,*" *in* "*Every-day Religion.*"

PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR.

O eternal and holy Father, now, on the eve of a new year, my heart goes up to thee in thankfulness which I have no voice to utter, no words to express. O thou who hast hedged me round with so many evidences of thy love, I would fain render unto thee the thank-offering of grateful service for all the many gifts by which thou hast revealed thyself unto me.

I bless thee for the friends whom thou hast given me, and for the love which in them thou hast revealed unto me; for all

thy gifts of speech, of art, of science, by which thou hast taught me to lift my heart in thankfulness to thee, and to share with others the treasures of thy love.

And, above all, I offer unto thee humble and hearty praise for the knowledge which thou hast in thine infinite goodness added unto me, that it is from thy fatherly hand all good gifts come, not to me only, but to all thy children everywhere. Be with me in the coming year, O my Father, as thou hast ever been; and make me, I pray thee, more worthy of the countless mercies which I have received at thy hands. Make me more humble, more diligent, more ready to listen to thy voice within me. Let not my sins get the better of me. Let me not lose the consciousness of thy love, nor cease to feel how terrible is thy displeasure. Save me not from the consequences of my faults; but, if it be possible, O Lord, let them not bring evil upon others.

Visit, I beseech thee, with thy chastisement, all my sins, negligences, and ignorances, and give me true repentance. Make my future life a constant thank-offering to thee; and teach me to find my greatest joy in the service thy wisdom appoints for me, whatever that service may be. Thus, when all the years of my life are told, I may still bless thee, "who hast redeemed my life from destruction, and crowned me with loving-kindness and tender mercies."— *From "Alone to the Alone."*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.*]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the *first* request.

Latin.

Potts's "Latin Prose Composition"; "Six Weeks' Preparation for Reading Cæsar"; Thring's "Latin Gradual"; "Excerpta Facilia"; "Latin Primer"; Jones's "Latin Prose Composition"; "Easy Latin Stories"; "Gradatim"; Virgil's "Bucolics and Six Books of the Æneid"; "First Latin Steps"; "Parallel Exercises in English and Latin," Nixon; Thompson's "Ladder to Latin."

German.

Andersen's "Ausgewählte Märchen"; "Deutsche Novellenschatz"; Theodor Storm's "Immensee"; "Jungfrau von Orleans"; Stern's "German Exercises"; "Hundert Kurze Erzählungen"; Peter Schlemihl's "Wundersame Geschichte"; Grimm's "Märchen"; "Der Letzte Mohikan," J. Fenimore Cooper.

French.

"French Manual," Gibert; "Petit à Petit, Premières Leçons de Francais," par A. Herting; "Contes de Fées"; "Les Petites Filles Modèles"; "Illustrated French Primer," Hachette; "Capi et sa Troupe," Hector Malot.

Fiction.

"Private Miles O'Reilly"; "Rhoda Fleming," Meredith; "Margery," Ebers; "The Shadow of a Crime"; "A Floating City," "The Blockade Runners," and "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea," Jules Verne.

The Women's Alliance of the Second Church, Salem, offer the following books. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.

Educational.

Greenleaf's "Elementary Algebra," "Treatise on Elementary Geometry," "Treatise on Plane and Solid Geometry"; Comer's "Book-keeping"; Colton and Fitch's "Geography"; "Physical Geography," Warren; Bradbury's Eaton's "Practical Arithmetic"; Town's "Speller"; Smith's "Juvenile Speller and Definer"; "Spanish Dictionary"; "Latin Grammar"; "First Lessons in Latin," Andrews; "Life of Julius Cæsar" (Latin); "Le Grandpère"; "Les Petits Oiseaux"; "La Joie fait Peur"; "Corinne"; "Histoire de la Mère Michel "Robinson de Paris"; Dramatic Works in French.

Religious.

"The Recreations of a Country Parson" (2 vols.); "The Every-day Philosopher in Town and Country"; "History of the Supernatural" (2 vols.), William Howitt; "The Layman's Breviary"; "A Present Heaven"; "The Patience of Hope"; "The Life of the Saviour," Ware; "Heaven and Hell," Swedenborg; "Formation of Christian Character," Ware; "Home Life," Ware; "Pilgrim's Progress," Bunyan, edition of 1818.

Miscellaneous.

"European Life and Manners," Colman; "The Schönberg-Cotta Family"; "Hopes and Fears" and "Heir of Redclyffe," C. M. Yonge; "Alone," Marion Harland; "Silent Struggles," Ann S. Stevens; "From Dawn to Dark in Italy," a tale of the sixteenth century; "Aspenwald"; "Ego," H. W. French; "Tales of the Marines"; "Wensley"; "Jargal," Victor Hugo; "Neighbors' Children"; "Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands," H. B. Stowe; "The Italian Goldsmith"; "The Silver Cup"; "Rozella of Laconia"; "The Two Destinies," Wilkie Collins; "Life of P. T. Barnum"; "Modern Horse Doctor"; "Adventures in Madeira"; "Life and Sayings of Mrs. Partington"; "Life in Danbury"; "The Vacation"; "Child's Play"; "The Shady Side"; "American History"; "African History"; "Asiatic History"; "European History"; "Famous Indians"; "Animal Kingdom"; "Book of Literature"; "Enterprise and Art of Man"; *Harper's Young People*, 1885; odd numbers of *St. Nicholas*, 1891, 1893; *Cosmopolitan*, 1892, 1893; *Century*, 1888, 1891, 1892, 1893; *Scribner's*, 1888, 1892, 1893; *Harper's*, 1889, 1893, 1894; *Lippincott's; Frank Leslie's Monthly*, June to December, 1885, the year 1888; *New England Home Magazine;* "Under Sealed Orders," G. Allen; "Lady of the Lake," Walter Scott; "A Common Man," L. V. Bogy; "Our Gold Mine at Hollyhurst"; "The Strike at Shane's"; "Jane Eyre"; "The Last of the Van Stacks"; "Self-devotion"; "The Czarina," Mrs. Holland; "The Visionary," Schiller; "The Diary," "Strife and Peace," F. Bremer; "Haunted Man," "Christmas Carol," "Old Curiosity Shop," C. Dickens.

For the following books address Miss Lucy U. Sise, 3 Court Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire: "Daily Light"; "Annals of a Baby"; "Story of Himself," Maxwell; "Through the Darkness," Mary H. Seymour; "Silent Comforter," Harper; "Devotional Hymns"; "Hymn Book," A. P. Peabody; "Stories on the Shorter Catechism," J. Todd; "Christian Life"; "Homeward Path"; "Hymns of the Ages"; "Best Hours"; "Christmas Hours"; "From the Journal of a Bereaved Mother"; "Sarah and her Cousins"; "Cousin Elizabeth"; "Young Naturalist," A. C. Mant; "Tracts"; "The Wreath"; "Columbia's Emblem"; "Lessons on Practical Subjects"; "Mogul Emperors of Hindustan," Holden; "Parlor Muse"; "Exploits of Brigadier Gerard," A. Conan Doyle; "The Garden"; "Religious Souvenir"; "Regeneration"; "Hymns for the Church of Christ"; "How New England was Made," F. A. Humphrey; "Pearl"; "School Boy," Abbott; "Love Token for Children," "Home," Sedgwick; "Tales for Ellen"; "My Thimbles"; "Paul and Virginia" (French copy); "Questions on St. Paul's Epistles"; "Memorial of John W. Foster"; "Songs of Seven," Jean Ingelow; "Ships that pass in the Night," Beatrice Harraden; "Spark of Genius," Trafton; "Memoirs of a Brother," Hughes; "Sermons," Dr. Hale; "Hymns for Children"; "Cranford," Mrs. Gaskell; "Memorial Sermon on A. P. Peabody"; "Sermons," James Freeman Clarke; "Five Prophets of To-day"; "Sermon in the Hospital," Ugo Bassi; "Vision of Sir Launfal"; "Words of Comfort and Consolation"; "The Land of Desolation," Dr. Hayes; "Looking Backward," Bellamy; "Try Again," Oliver Optic; "Robert Elsmere"; "Memoir of Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D."; "Christian Doctrine of Prayer," James Freeman Clarke; "Marble Faun," "Wonder Book," Hawthorne; "Glaucus," Charles Kingsley; "The Earth's History," Ansted; "Experiences of an English Sister of Mercy," Margaret Goodwin; "The Golden Fleece"; "Sermons to Children," F. W. P. Greenwood; "Miss Defarge," F. Hodgson Burnett; "Persuasives of Early Piety"; "Advice to Young Christians"; "Leonora," Mrs. Edgeworth; "Pompeii"; "The Sisters," Georg Ebers; "Vicar of Wakefield," Goldsmith; "Martin Chuzzlewit," "David Copperfield," Charles Dickens; Longfellow's "Poems"; "Matins"; "Recalled to Life," Grant Allen; "The Entailed Hat," G. A.

Townsend; "A Knight of Philadelphia," J. A. Altsheler; "An Imperative Duty," W. D. Howells; "Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After," Tennyson; "Bound by a Spell," Hugh Conway; "The Boys of Brimstone Court," Elizabeth Stuart Phelps; "Songs for the Sabbath"; "Scientific Library of Useful and Polite Literature"; "Formation of Christian Character," Ware; "Well Won," Mrs. Alexander; "The Stickit Minister," S. R. Crockett; "Aulney Tower," Blanche Willis Howard; "A Matter of Skill," Beatrice Whitby; "The Maddoxes," Mrs. J. Middlemass; "Paul Redding," T. B. Read.

School Books.

"Lessons in Geometry," Hill; Legendre's "Geometry and Trigonometry"; Davies's "Geometry"; Levigac's "French Grammar"; "Chemical Catechism"; "Practical Papers," E. S. Pfeiffer; "French Grammar"; Greenleaf's "Arithmetic"; Walker's "Geometry"; Andrews's "Latin Exercises"; Putnam's "Reader"; Emerson's "Arithmetic"; Weld's "Latin Lessons"; Comstock's "Chemistry"; "Rhetorical Reader"; "Robertsonian System of Teaching French"; Colburn's "Algebra"; Colburn's "Arithmetic"; Day's "Algebra"; "Viri Romæ"; Landreyt's "French Conversation"; Moore's "Virgil."

Magazines.

Odd numbers of *Century, Scribner, Cosmopolitan, Atlantic, Popular Science Monthly, Littell, Forum, Book Buyer.*

The First Church Alliance of Salem offers the following books. Address Miss Alice D. Perkins, 5 Oliver Street, Salem, Mass. *Babyland*, 1886, 1887; *St. Nicholas*, 1889, 1890–92; *Oliver Optic*, 1873, 1874; *Youth's Companion*, 1887, 1894–96, April to December, 1889; *Harper's Magazine*, 1875; "The Master of Ballantrae"; "Miss Tommy"; "The Bow of Orange Ribbon"; "Not like Other Girls."

John Hayes, Pepperell, Mass., offers odd magazines, and would like to correspond with boys of sixteen or eighteen years.

Harold Woodward, Pepperell, Mass., offers *Dumb Animals* and *Every Other Sunday*, and wishes a correspondent.

The King's Chapel Branch offers a number of copies of each of the following children's books: "The Arabian Nights"; "Jackanapes, and other stories," Mrs. Ewing; Hawthorne's "Wonder Book"; and "Alice in Wonderland." Apply to Miss K. A. Homans, 164 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

The Young Women's Alliance, Plymouth, Mass., offers the following. Address Miss Annie Lane Alden, 14 North Street. "Seven Oaks," J. G. Holland; "A Matter of Skill," Beatrice Whitby; "Merle's Crusade," Rosa Nouchette Carey; "Auld Licht Idylls," J. M. Barrie; "The House of Seven Gables," Hawthorne; "Mill on the Floss," George Eliot; "A Mere Child," Walford; "Quentin Durward," "Rob Roy," Scott; "Green Pastures and Piccadilly," William Black; "Outre-Mer," Longfellow; "The Autobiography of a Slander," Edna Lyall; *The Ladies' World*, 1895–97; *McClure's*, 1898; *Munsey*, 1896–98; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1894–97; *St. Nicholas*, 1889; *Recreation*, 1898; *Cosmopolitan*, 1898.

Mrs. Ida L. B. Paul, 6 St. Botolph Street, Boston, Mass., offers the Boston *Sunday Herald* and *Saturday Evening Transcript.*

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Standing requests for libraries from: —

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Mrs. Margaret Ogilvie, "The Bonnie Briars," Grand Junction, Colorado. Mrs. Ogilvie is struggling to place in each school in her county, where the school committee will furnish a bookcase, a collection of good books. She has already supplied several schools, but there are three or four more in which she is particularly interested.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please

write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

I wish to thank the ladies of the Cheerful Letter Exchange for the reading matter they so kindly sent me. Now I would like to ask their assistance for a colored Sunday-school which has been gotten up near me. I do not teach in it myself, but a friend who does has been asking me to help her get books for them. She finds "A Story of the Bible," by Charles Foster, especially adapted to their tastes and needs. She would be pleased to get several copies of that and any books or papers suitable for them. Mrs. James N. Womack, Farmville, Virginia.

Mrs. Rachel B. Miller, Tygh, Wasco County, Oregon, will be thankful for any books or magazines.

Mrs. Helen M. Griffey, Sebeka, Minnesota, a shut-in from lameness, asks for reading for the winter months.

I would like to have you send me the book "Arabian Nights," as up here in the district I have little to read. My address is Goldfield, Colorado, El Paso County. My name is Edith Meskimen.

Mrs. M. T. Stone, Athens, Tennessee, asks for Steele's "Elementary Chemistry."

Miss Lizzie Smith, Schoolcraft, Michigan, would like good reading for herself and to pass on to others.

I am a country girl with limited means, and trying to educate myself, besides helping the family. Have only one brother, and he is a cripple. I teach part of the time, and then go to school. I am very anxious for Robinson's "Higher Arithmetic" and a little pocket dictionary for myself, also a Harvey's Grammar for my little sister. For one or all of these I will indeed feel grateful. Any reading matter would be thankfully received, as we live in a not very thickly settled neighborhood. Miss Maggie Frazelle, Manchester, North Carolina.

Any Unitarian works are asked for by Mrs. Sallie A. Holloway, Pine Grove, Texas.

Sanford's Arithmetic, Harrington's Spelling-book, Maussy's Geography, and Harvey's Grammar are wanted by Dora Suttenfield, Mayo, North Carolina.

May I ask for a few books suitable for children from six to sixteen years of age? I am teaching in the country a school of forty-nine pupils. This is my second year, and I have bought charts and have tried to give them every advantage enjoyed by school children in the towns; and I have given them little story books, which they eagerly read, and seem to hunger for more. So a few good books for children would be very much appreciated here, especially "Five Little Peppers." Address Miss Lizzie Long, Byron, Houston County, Georgia.

Mrs. F. Graham, Chelsea, Indian Territory, asks for the *People's Home Journal* and some book on crocheting and other fancy work.

Mrs. Joseph Lord, care of Florida Brewing Company, Tampa, Florida, asks for the *Outlook*.

Mrs. Mary E. Roy, Washington, Louisiana, would be glad to receive "Stepping Heavenward," also the *Ladies' Home Journal* or any magazines.

"Cloister and Hearth" is asked for by Mrs. A. A. Cochran, Rocheport, Boone County, Missouri.

Mrs. Mattie A. Leach, Florien, Sabine County, Louisiana, asks for the following books: Wells's "Natural Philosophy"; "Natural History Reader"; "Child's History of England"; "Joy, Rest, and Faith"; "The Changed Life," Drummond; "Life Eternal," T. F. Wright.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE FAMILY, BY "H. H."

"He is lover and friend and son, all in one," said a friend, the other day, telling me of a dear boy who, out of his first earnings, had just sent to his mother a beautiful gift, costing much more than he could really afford for such a purpose.

That mother is the wisest, sweetest, most triumphant mother I have ever known. I am restrained, by feelings of deepest reverence for her, from speaking, as I might speak, of the rare and tender methods by which her motherhood has worked, patiently and alone, for nearly twenty years, and made of her two sons "lovers and friends." I have always felt that she owed it to the world to impart to other mothers all that she could of her divine secret; to write out, even in detail, all the processes by which her boys have grown to be so strong, upright, loving, and manly.

But one of her first principles has so direct a bearing on the subject that I wish to speak of here that I venture to attempt an explanation of it. She has told me that she never once, even in their childish days, took the ground that she had a right to require anything from them simply because she was their mother. This is a position very startling to the average parent. It is exactly counter to traditions.

"Why must I?" or "Why may not I?" says the child. "Because I say so, and I am your father," has been the stern, authoritative reply ever since we can any of us remember, and, I presume, ever since the Christian era, since that good apostle Paul saw enough in the Ephesian families where he visited to lead him to write to them from Rome, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

It seems to me that there are few questions of practical moment in every-day living on which a foregone and erroneous conclusion has been adopted so generally and so undoubtingly. How it first came about is hard to see. Or, rather, it is easy to see, when one reflects; and the very clearness of the surface explanation of it only makes its injustice more odious. It came about because the parent was strong and the child weak. Helplessness in the hands of power,— that is the whole story. Suppose for an instant (and, absurd as the supposition is practically, it is not logically absurd) that the child at six were strong enough to whip his father; let him have the intellect of an infant, the mistakes and faults of an infant,— which the father would feel himself bound and would be bound to correct,— but the body of a man; and then see in how different fashion the father would set himself to work to insure good behavior. I never see the heavy, impatient hand of a grown man or woman laid with its brute force, even for the smallest purpose, on a little child, without longing for a sudden miracle to give the baby an equal strength to resist.

When we realize what it is for us to dare, for our own pleasure,— even with solemnest purpose of the holiest of pleasures, parenthood,— to bring into existence a soul, which must take for our sake its chance of joy or sorrow, how monstrous it seems to assume that the fact that we have done this thing gives us arbitrary right to control that soul; to set our will, as will, in place of its will; to be law unto its life; to try to make of it what it suits our fancy or our convenience to have it; to claim that it is under obligation to us!

The truth is, all the obligation, in the outset, is the other way. We owe all to them. All that we can do to give them happiness, to spare them pain. All that we can do to make them wise, good, and safe,— all is too little! All, and more than all, can never repay them for the sweetness, the blessedness, the development, that it has been to us to call children ours. If we can also so win their love by our loving, so deserve their respect by our honorableness, so earn their gratitude by our helpfulness, that they come to be our "lovers and friends," then, ah! then we have had enough of heaven here to make us willing to postpone the more for which we hope beyond.

But all this comes not of authority, not by command. All this is perilled always, always impaired, and often lost by authoritative, arbitrary ruling, substitution of law and penalty for influence.

It will be objected by parents who disagree with this theory that only authority can prevent license, that without command there will not be control. No one has a right to condemn methods he has not tried. I know (for I have seen), I know, (for I have myself tested), that command and authority are short-lived; that they do not insure the results they aim at; that real and permanent control of a child's behavior, even in little things, is gained only by influence, by a slow, sure, educating, enlightening, and strengthening of a child's will. I know, for I have seen, that it is possible in this way

to make a child only ten years old quite as intelligent and trustworthy a free agent as his mother,—to make him so sensible, so gentle, so considerate, that to say "must" or "must not" to him would be as unnecessary and absurd as to say it to her.

But, if it be wiser and better to surround even little children with this atmosphere of freedom, how much more essential is it for those who remain under the parental roof long after they have ceased to be children! Just here seems to me to be the fatal rock upon which many households make utter shipwreck of their peace. Fathers and mothers who have ruled by authority—let it be as loving as you please, it will still remain an arbitrary rule—in the beginning never seem to know when their children are children no longer, but have become men and women. In any average family the position of an unmarried daughter after she is twenty years old becomes less and less what it should be. In case of sons the question is rarely a practical one. In those exceptional instances where invalidism or some other disability keeps a man helpless for years under his father's roof, his very helplessness is at once his vindication and his shield, and also prevents his feeling manly revolt against the position of unnatural childhood. But in the case of daughters it is very different. Who does not number in his circle of acquaintance many unmarried women between the ages of thirty and forty, perhaps even older, who have practically little more freedom in the ordering of their own lives than they had when they were eleven? The mother or the father continues just as much the autocratic centre of the family now as of the nursery thirty years before. Taking into account the chance—no, the certainty—of great differences between parents and children in matters of temperament and taste, it is easy to see that great suffering must result from this,—suffering, too, which involves real loss and hindrance to growth. It is really a monstrous wrong; but it seems to be rarely observed by the world, and never suspected by those who are most responsible for it. It is, perhaps, a question whether the real tyrannies in this life are those that are accredited as such. There are certainly more than even tyrants know.

Every father and mother has it within easy reach to become the intimate friend of the child. Closest, holiest, sweetest of all friendships is this one which has the closest, holiest tie of blood to underlie the bond of soul. We see it in rare cases proving itself divine by rising above even the passion of love between man and woman, and carrying men and women unwedded to their graves for the sake of love of father or mother. When we realize what such friendship is, it seems incredible that parents can forego it, or can risk losing any shade of its perfectness for the sake of any indulgence of the habit of command or of gratifying of selfish preference.

In the ideal household of father and mother and adult children the one great aim of the parents ought to be to supply, as far as possible, to each child that freedom and independence which they have missed the opportunity of securing in homes of their own. The loss of this one thing alone is a bitterer drop in the loneliness of many an unmarried woman than parents, especially fathers, are apt even to dream, food and clothes and lodgings are so exalted in unthinking estimates. To be without them would be distressingly inconvenient, no doubt; but one can have luxurious provision of both, and remain very wretched. Even the body itself cannot thrive if it has no more than these three pottage messes. Freedom to come, go, speak, work, play,—in short, to be one's self,—is to the body more than meat and gold, and to the soul the whole of life.

Just so far as any parent interferes with this freedom of adult children, even in the little things of a single day or a single hour, just so far is it tyranny, and the children are wronged. But just so far as parents help, strengthen, and bestow this freedom on their children, just so far it is justice and kindness; and their relation is cemented into a supreme and unalterable friendship, whose blessedness and whose comfort no words can measure.

The first requisite of a good corrector is that he be a good lover. If you want to find fault, first find hearts. Words do not reach your brother's will except along the telegraph wires of heart-strings. If he won't do it for your heart, he won't do it for your tongue.—*Amos R. Wells.*

A LETTER.

I always read the articles in the "Mother's Council" with attention and interest; and I wish, as I think some others do, that we might have a number of short articles, representing different sides of the same subject. I wish some one else would give her opinion on the point presented in the December number; that is, "that the natural punishment, the effect which follows the cause, is the only one which can safely be used with children."

This does not seem to me a sound position, and I would like to see the opinions of others in regard to it.

When people are grown up, they meet with the natural results of their faults, but the years of childhood are intended to prepare us for the sterner discipline of later life; and to apply exactly the same principles and methods that govern the years of manhood is to demand that there shall be no childhood; and for this system it is requisite that a child of three or four shall have the mind and the character of a man of thirty or forty.

From other reasons the position seems to me untenable. Let us suggest some illustrations.

A child of three has the habit of playing with matches. The natural result is that he sets himself on fire, and is burned to death. Or he climbs upon the window-sill, falls into the street, and is killed. He throws a fork at his brother, and the natural result is that the *other* child's eye is put out. He has a habit of running away, and is lost. He goes dangerously near to a river or pond, falls into the water, and is drowned. In the life of almost every child, these dangers are real. And there are others, less fatal, yet serious, of almost daily occurrence. What child of three or four can realize the danger of eating unwholesome food, of exposure to cold? What child can understand the importance of self-control, self-denial, habits of industry and application?

The child's reason and conscience are in embryo, his judgment is unformed, and it is for this reason that he has parents to guide him. It is as unreasonable to expect that his mind should be mature enough to judge wisely, when passion and impulse are urging him forward, as that his body at three years old shall be full grown.

The second part of my thesis is that a child is *happier* when taught obedience to authority than when he is reasoned or argued with, and yet allowed to decide questions for himself. There is no need that authority should be harsh; and real authority is good-humored and gentle, though firm. Jacob Abbott has shown us that the sharp tone and imperious manner which some people associate with the idea of authority are more often the traits of those who have no real government, and whose children are disobedient and unruly.

I see that I have omitted one point that was in my mind when I began. Mischievous and untrained children usually infringe on the rights and property of others. The sense of *meum* and *tuum* is not strong in early life; and, when lawless and riotous children destroy articles of value which do not belong to them, and trample upon the rights of older people, the only natural effect is that the victims suffer, but the child has no punishment. And yet it is precisely in such a case as this that there should be some penalty, since no one has a right to allow a child to become a public nuisance.

More might be said, but I hope the subject will be taken up by others.

Sister Constance.

Sainthood attained through triumph over evil is more than angelic life that never experienced moral gain by battlings with sin.—*H. Clay Trumbull.*

A story is told of a woman who freely used her tongue to the scandal of others, and made a confession to the priest of what she had done. He gave her a ripe thistle-top, and told her to go out in various directions, and scatter the seeds one by one. Wondering at the penance, she obeyed, and then returned and told her confessor. To her amazement, he bade her go back and gather the scattered seeds; and, when she objected that it would be impossible, he replied that it would be still more difficult to gather up and destroy all the evil reports which she had circulated about others. Any thoughtless, careless child can scatter a handful of thistle-seed before the wind in a moment, but the strongest and wisest man cannot gather them again.—*Methodist.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.*]

ENIGMAS.

1.

There is a thing that nothing is,
And yet it has a name.
'Tis sometimes tall, and sometimes short,
It joins our walks, it joins our sport,
And plays at every game.

2.

A house full, a yard full, but you can't catch a bowl full.

3.

I have but one eye, and that eye without sight,
Yet it helps me whatever I do.
I'm sharp without wits, without senses I'm bright,
The fortune of some, and of some the delight;
And I doubt not I'm useful to you.

4.

I tremble with each breath of air,
And yet can heaviest burdens bear.
'Tis known that I destroyed the world,
And all things in confusion hurled;
And yet I do preserve all in it
Through each revolving hour and minute.

FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS.

Who were the authors of the following quotations?

1. "Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow."
2. "Give me liberty or give me death."
3. "Liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable."
4. "The child is father of the man."
5. "Tall oaks from little acorns grow."
6. "God made the country, man made the town."
7. "As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

CHARADE.

My *first* is rocked on the briny deep,
My *next* as a ball is round;
My *third* comes direct from the sun to us,
We *fourth* evil sight and sound.
My *whole* is adornment of various kinds,
And gives its name to a day
That is dear to the hearts of the country all,
And kept in impressive way.

E. P. P.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN DECEMBER NUMBER.

CHARADES.

1. Preliminary.
2. Finesse.

ENIGMAS.

1.

"Wreathe the holly, twine the bay."

2.

Santa Claus.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, on Friday, January 6, at 10.30 A.M. All interested in the work are cordially invited to be present.

The editor would be glad to receive from any one who does not need them for files, the following numbers of *The Cheerful Letter:* September, 1897; November, 1896; April, 1894; November, 1894; March, 1893; August, 1893.

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